

# DHS TELEWORKING POLICY

## TELEWORKING GUIDELINES

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Employees may request permission to telework during certain times of the year or on an on-going basis. Approval to telework is at management's discretion. The DHS Teleworking Policy and these Guidelines must be reviewed prior to requesting or approving teleworking. The conditions listed below apply to all teleworking employees:

### **I. *Employee Participation***

Teleworking is a management option not an employee right. Teleworking is a work arrangement between an individual employee and their manager/supervisor. An employee's participation in teleworking is voluntary. The employee, manager/supervisor, or other authorized official may terminate teleworking at any time. Issues involving teleworking are not appealable, grievable or subject to review.

The teleworking employee's conditions of employment with the department remain the same as for non-teleworking employees. The employee is covered by and will adhere to all policies, rules, and regulations of the department and state while teleworking. The teleworker agrees not to conduct personal business while teleworking.

### **II. *Self-Assessment***

An employee interested in participating in teleworking will be required to complete the *TELEWORKER SELF-ASSESSMENT* Form (See Attachment #5) in order to determine if teleworking would be right for him or her. The official copy of the form is maintained by the manager/supervisor.

### **III. *Work Space Self-Certification***

As a condition of permission to telework, the employee must verify that their home or other alternate facilities used for teleworking purposes are safe and suitable for purposes of the employee's work. The department may deny an employee the opportunity to telework if the alternate work site is not conducive to productive work. A *TELEWORKER WORK SPACE SELF-CERTIFICATION* Form (See Attachment #6) must be completed. The official copy of the form is maintained by the manager/supervisor.

### **IV. *Equipment and Supplies***

Office supplies (e.g., pens and paper) shall be provided by the department and should be obtained during the teleworker's in-office work period. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies regularly available from the department will not normally be reimbursed without prior approval from the employee's manager/supervisor.

The employee is expected to use his or her own furniture, telephone lines, and other equipment. Any use of private facilities of the employee will be at the employee's discretion and not at the direction or expense of the department, **except as may be agreed upon by the employee, division/office director and the Chief Financial Officer**. This applies to all physical improvements and conveniences as well as services.

**It may be permissible for the Department to install telephone lines and other state equipment in a teleworking employee's home. HOWEVER, PRIOR APPROVAL MUST BE OBTAINED FROM THE DHS CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER and the use of such equip**

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**ment and service must be for Department business only and the Department retains responsibility for the use, care and disposition of the State-owned property. (See Section A – General Provisions of the DHS Teleworking Policy #111).** Agencies, **may also** give written permission for certain equipment (e.g., computers, printers, etc.) to be checked out and used at the alternate work site. As department equipment is the property of the state, the department must retain the responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of state-owned property following state laws and procedures.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all department issued equipment is maintained in a safe and secure manner. Equipment must be connected to a grounded electrical outlet and into a surge protector. All equipment, material and/or other property will be immediately returned upon request, termination of participation in the teleworking program and/or termination of employment. Employees are not authorized to use department issued equipment for personal use. Employees taking equipment and/or supplies to the alternate work location will be responsible for completing the ***DHS PROPERTY REMOVAL*** form (See Attachment 4). This is a detailed list of all equipment to include serial number, make, model, EDP number, DHS Tag number. The official copy is maintained by the manager/supervisor. A copy must also be sent to the Division/Office Property Management Coordinator.

### **V.     *Work Space and Work Hours***

A defined work space and defined core work hours are necessary (1) to reduce the state's exposure to risk, (2) to facilitate proper management of teleworkers, and (3) to ensure work is done in a productive environment.

The employee shall maintain a clean, safe work space that is adequate for work and free of obstructions and distractions. To ensure that productive working conditions exist, it may be necessary to make on-site visits at mutually agreed-upon times. However, this will be handled by the department on a case-by-case basis. The teleworker shall designate a specific work space at the alternate work place and will conduct work for the department from that location.

Each employee that teleworks shall develop a work schedule with their manager/supervisor and the manager/supervisor must agree in advance to any changes to the employee's work schedule. FLSA non-exempt employees must obtain approval from their manager/supervisor before performing overtime work. An FLSA non-exempt employee working overtime without approval may result in the ***DHS TELEWORKING AGREEMENT*** being terminated. The employee must obtain management/supervisory approval prior to taking leave during a designated teleworking day.

The employee must maintain contact with the office as specified in the work schedule, department policy and ***DHS TELEWORKING AGREEMENT***.

An employee's activities outside the time of work or outside the place designated for work will be deemed to be in the employee's own personal time and place, unconnected with work activities.

An employee's teleworking hours will conform to a schedule agreed upon by the employee and manager/supervisor. Any significant changes must be reviewed and approved by the employee's manager/supervisor in advance.

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### **VI. *Expenses and Compensable Time***

An employee may work from his/her home or another alternate work site that has been approved by the department. Mileage between the home and the employee's assigned office or telework center shall be considered commute mileage and not subject to reimbursement.

Work-related long distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days. At the discretion of the manager/supervisor, expenses for work-related long distance calls and cell phone calls, which must be made from a teleworker's home may be reimbursed if the reasons and costs for the calls are documented. The teleworker is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair, and operation of personal equipment not provided by the state.

### **VII. *Security and Access to Information***

The teleworking employee is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate work place, as the employee would at the primary work place. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to departmental computer systems. Any compromise of data, records or other information must be immediately reported to the employee's manager/supervisor. Please see further information regarding security in the Telework Policy #111, Section E-8.

### **VIII. *Child and Dependent Care***

Teleworking is not a substitute for child care or dependent care. The teleworker shall continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the main office. Employees will manage child and dependent care in a way that allows them to successfully fulfill work responsibilities.

### **IX. *Liability***

The employee's home work space when used for teleworking is an extension of the department work space. The state's liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location. The teleworker is covered under the State Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the alternate work place.

If an injury occurs during teleworking work hours, then the employee shall immediately report the injury to the manager/supervisor. The employee, manager/supervisor, and department should follow the state's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.

The State of Georgia is not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee's home. The teleworker may not have business guests at the alternate work place or any other location except the department's offices.

The teleworker is responsible for contacting the teleworker's insurance agent and a tax consultant and consulting local ordinances for information regarding home work places, including neighborhood association guidelines (i.e., community/sub-division covenants).

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Employees are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment in their alternate work place. Employees' work areas are subject to a pre-inspection to ensure their proper safety and, employees are required to immediately notify their manager/supervisor as conditions change.

## **X. *DHS TELEWORKING AGREEMENT***

A *DHS TELEWORKING AGREEMENT* (See Attachment #2) must be completed and signed by the employee and manager/supervisor prior to the start of teleworking. This agreement is to be reviewed at the end of a 90-day probationary period and then at least annually. The agreement is also to be reviewed whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), or whenever the teleworking employee or manager/supervisor change positions.

Employees must agree to participate in studies, inquiries, reports or analyses relating to teleworking at the DHS Teleworking Coordinator's direction.

## **XI. *Compliance with FLSA***

Supervisors must ensure that all teleworking employees conform to designated work schedules. FLSA non-exempt employees must comply with all provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. (See DHS Human Services/Personnel Policy #1001) FLSA non-exempt employees are required to maintain accurate time sheets while teleworking.

## **XII. *Training***

Managers/supervisors and employees must be trained on all aspects of teleworking, prior to the employee beginning teleworking.

## **XIII. *Expectations for and Monitoring Employee Performance***

Jobs suitable for teleworking are characterized by clearly defined results. A teleworker's performance is measured by results rather than presence at the main work location; therefore, it is critical to ensure that performance expectations are clearly defined so that a proper evaluation can be conducted at designated intervals as outlined in the teleworking agreement. Authorized officials, managers/supervisors or employees may terminate the voluntary teleworking agreement at any time.

## **XIV. *Reporting***

The teleworker must submit their teleworking days and time to the designated staff person in their division/office by the first (1<sup>st</sup>) working day of the month. If they are approved for regular teleworking days and do not telework, this must also be reported.

If the teleworker moves to another location for teleworking, they must complete a new TELEWORK IN PEOPLESOFT ENROLLMENT FORM (See Attachment #3) and submit it to their Division/office Coordinator.

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